

House Republican Press Release

September 26, 2005
Press Office: 860-240-8700

New Laws To Take Effect



By State Representative John J. Ryan

Summer is officially over, the leaves will be turning color soon, and the baseball playoffs are almost upon us! And in the legislative world, it is almost October 1, the day when nearly all of the new laws recently passed by the General Assembly take effect. Some, such as the budget deal details or the new Estate Tax that have been touched upon in our previous columns, affect you mainly in the wallet, but there are actually some that will impact your everyday life. So let's take a quick look at some of the new laws coming 'on line':

- Cell phones (Public Act 05-159): there has been a considerable amount of publicity on this one, so I can't imagine that you have not obtained your hands-free setup; if you have been tardy, get going, because I expect that the authorities will be enforcing this new provision (long overdue, in my view). And even better still, rather than talking (even 'hands free') while driving, can't you really wait until you are off the road, to make that routine, or non-urgent call? And if you believe that your Blackberry is not a 'cell phone' for purposes of the new law, you had better review the exact provisions!
- Car child restraint systems (PA 05-58): while it is hard to miss all of the cell phone news items, many are unaware of this important topic. (And thanks to our Darien Police for their educational efforts on child car safety) Please be aware that the new law provides that any child under 1 year of age OR weighing less than 20 lbs. must be in a rear-facing child carrier, and also, children under age 7 OR weighing less than 60 lbs. must be in a child restraint system!
- Small claims court cases (PA 05-42): do you have a claim against someone that you want to do on your own without lawyers? (I assume that you know that the real system is not exactly like "Judge Judy"?) You might want to know that the small claims jurisdictional limit is going up to \$5,000.00.
- Breast cancer screening (PA 05-69): have you been concerned about going for this test because you might have to pay for it? It seems appropriate that when the month of October (Breast Cancer Awareness Month) starts, this type of screening will now be covered by health insurance

- Gift cards (PA 05 – 289): if you like to choose this convenient alternative for a conventional present, are you concerned about a problem with how long your recipient would have to redeem the card? Check the provisions of this new law, which essentially does away with gift card expiration periods.

Of course, there are far too many new laws (as usual) to cover in our small space, but I would be remiss if I did not warn you that if you have a document (a mortgage release?) that has to be recorded in the Land Records in your Town Clerk's office, do it NOW, unless you want to pay the newly increased recording fee!

And we assume that as astute column readers, you are familiar with how to look up legislation and statutes, so feel free to go to: www.cga.ct.gov on the web, since we have included the Public Act numbers for your reference, and read the exact language for yourself.

Please feel free to contact me with your concerns and issues. As your state representative, it is my job, and my priority to represent you and to make sure that your needs and concerns are addressed at the capitol. You can write to me at Room 4200, Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT 06106-1591, send me e-mail at John.Ryan@cga.ct.gov or call my office toll-free at 1-800-842-1423.